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General Assembly
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Official Records

91st plenary meeting
Thursday, 13 July 2017, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Thomson ..... (Fiji)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 69 (*continued*)

Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance

(c) Special economic assistance to individual countries or regions

Draft resolution (A/71/L.78)

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Jamaica to introduce draft resolution A/71/L.78.

Mr. Rattray (Jamaica): My delegation is pleased to have collaborated with the delegation of Mexico to introduce draft resolution A/71/L.78 for consideration and adoption by the General Assembly. We welcome the support received from the many delegations that participated in the consultations on the text and thank those that joined in sponsoring the draft resolution.

The crisis spawned by the introduction and spread of cholera in Haiti, which resulted from the actions and inaction of the United Nations, is not one to which we can turn a blind eye. It stands starkly as a stain against the good name of the United Nations and represents a challenge to our shared purpose of promoting and preserving human rights, international peace and security, and development.

Jamaica therefore wholeheartedly welcomed the apology offered by the former Secretary-General, which included his acknowledgement that the United Nations had a moral responsibility to help Haiti's cholera victims. We are in full support of the elaboration of the new United Nations system approach to cholera in Haiti and call on individual Member States, the embodiment of our United Nations, to make every effort to repair the harm caused by cholera and to work to prevent further outbreaks. That will not be easy, as cholera is now endemic in Haiti and will continue to affect people for years to come. It is our responsibility, therefore, to mobilize the political will and financial support required to end the transmission of this deadly disease, which continues to afflict our fellow Member State some seven years after its outbreak.

Through both its tracks, the new United Nations approach serves as a strategic plan to effectively tackle the multiple dimensions and complexities of addressing the cholera crisis. That includes working from a humanitarian perspective, addressing the human rights situation and supporting sustainable development. In our view, our full response should always ensure a people-centred approach so that our paramount focus is on the rights, needs and circumstances of the victims, their families and communities.

We note with concern the limited resources that have been made available to fund the cholera response. It is for that reason that Jamaica supports the Secretary-General's proposal that Member States voluntarily waive the return of the 2015-2016 unencumbered balances and credits from miscellaneous income and adjustments from the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti and instead direct them to the United

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Nations Haiti Cholera Response Multi-Partner Trust Fund. We recognize that, at a minimum, the amount that could be raised would be small relative to the amount required. However, given the dire situation, we believe that every feasible source of funding can make a difference. In that vein, we also welcome the appointment of the Secretary-General's new Special Envoy for Haiti and express our optimism that her work to build partnerships with a wide range of stakeholders to support the United Nations work in Haiti will yield sustained results.

Jamaica looks forward to opportunities for further dialogue among the membership on more effective ways to provide further support for the new approach, especially with a view to ensuring that the United Nations lives up to its commitment to the people of Haiti, in particular the victims of the cholera outbreak and their families.

The President: The General Assembly will now take action on draft resolution A/71/L.78, entitled "The new United Nations approach to cholera in Haiti".

For the Assembly's information, the draft resolution has closed for e-sponsorship.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Ms. De Miranda (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of the draft resolution, in addition to those delegations listed in the document, the following countries have also become sponsors of A/71/L.78: Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Benin, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Cabo Verde, the Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Cyprus, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Estonia, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Ireland, Italy, Kenya, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, the Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nepal, the Netherlands, Nicaragua, Paraguay, the Philippines, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Spain, the Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, the United States of America and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/71/L.78?

Draft resolution A/71/L.78 was adopted (resolution 71/161 B).

The President: We will now hear statements following the adoption of the resolution.

Mrs. Nazaire (Haiti) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, my delegation would like to thank all the Member States that supported resolution 71/161 B, on the new United Nations approach to cholera in Haiti, which the Assembly just adopted by consensus. This adoption reflects the significant international support for the new approach, which is marked by a more open and generous strategy with regard to the repercussions of the cholera crisis in Haiti and, more important, one that is more in line with the ideal of the universal solidarity embodied by the United Nations.

My delegation therefore takes this opportunity to express its overwhelming gratitude to Jamaica and Mexico for their role as co-facilitators of the resolution. Their tireless efforts led to the broad support that will bolster the legitimacy and effectiveness of the new plan through its increased visibility and the solemn commitment of the international community to making an unprecedented effort to mobilize resources and garner moral support in the pursuit of eradicating cholera and its adverse effects in Haiti.

For my country, this epidemic has been a calamity that has served to highlight the significant structural obstacles to sustainable development in Haiti. My delegation is gratified that we now have the appropriate tools to channel the will and efforts of our loyal partners to this fight, for which my country lacks resources. In that regard, we welcome the recent nomination of Ms. Josette Sheeran as the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Haiti.

In conclusion, our hope for success is greatly renewed with this resolution. For that, my delegation is extremely grateful to all.

Mrs. Arrieta Munguia (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): It was a great honour for Mexico, alongside Jamaica, to co-facilitate such an important resolution (resolution 71/161 B), which we consider to be a genuine watershed in the fight against cholera in Haiti, as it enables us to redirect the balances and credits of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) to such an important development issue — health, sanitation and the long-term fight to permanently eradicate this scourge.

Mexico intends to continue to support Haiti this year in what we call the Yucatán Project. We have already pledged $362,000 to a fund for rebuilding an important national institution for Haitian midwives as part of our health focus. We hope that we can soon know the details of the resolutions of the closure of MINUSTAH. At that point we will be able to consider further contributions to our neighbouring brotherly country of Haiti.

Mr. Ten-Pow (Guyana): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 14 States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

I wish to first express our region's appreciation to the General Assembly for its support for resolution 71/161 B, on the new United Nations approach to cholera in Haiti.

CARICOM is pleased that the United Nations has remained consistent in its efforts to address the situation in Haiti. We were especially encouraged when former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon announced the new approach and urged all Member States to give their full support to the initiative aimed at controlling and eliminating cholera in Haiti. CARICOM believes that this initiative is one of the main platforms upon which progress in Haiti will continue to be made, and we wish to reiterate our commitment to the new approach. In that connection, we welcome the recent appointment of the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Haiti, Ms. Josette Sheeran. We believe that her appointment will give further impetus to the full implementation of the new approach.

While considerable national, regional and international efforts have been deployed in the fight against cholera in Haiti since 2010, and considerable progress has been made, Haiti continues to face significant challenges that affect those efforts. We are therefore heartened by the information contained in the second report of the Secretary-General to Member States (A/71/895) that under the new approach the number of suspected cases of cholera has declined substantially since 2016. That is an illustration of how a collaborative approach can positively and significantly impact the situation in our sister CARICOM country. We should be under no illusion, however, about the magnitude of the task at hand, as cholera is now endemic in Haiti.

The people of Haiti need the support of the entire international community, not only to alleviate the suffering caused by this deadly disease but also to positively and sustainably address the underlying conditions that increase the risk of cholera, in particular poverty — and in the case of Haiti, extreme poverty — weak sanitation infrastructure, limited access to clean water, poor housing conditions and a lack of basic health services. Please note that all of those are goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and help make the case for special assistance for Haiti, not only as a small island developing State but also because of the moral responsibility that the Organization bears towards this Member State.

We welcome the ongoing implementation of various projects by United Nations agencies, including UNICEF, the Pan American Health Organization and the World Health Organization, among others. Those efforts all contribute to the declining incidence of cholera in Haiti. While many challenges remain to be overcome, we believe that the United Nations is committed to the task at hand and, in partnership with other stakeholders in the international community, will continue to achieve tangible progress.

In order for it to be fully implemented, the new approach needs adequate financing. We therefore welcome the Secretary-General's stated intention to invite Member States to voluntarily direct their share of the unencumbered balance and other income for the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti to the United Nations Haiti Cholera Response Multi-Partner Trust Fund so as to support the new approach. CARICOM encourages further voluntary financial and other appropriate support to ensure that the momentum that we now see is maintained.

In conclusion, the States members of the Caribbean Community stand in solidarity with our sister nation of Haiti. We recognize that it is crucial to maintain the partnership among the United Nations, stakeholders in the international community and the Government and the people of Haiti in order to continue building on the progress achieved to date. We therefore urge all Member States to continue to support the new approach as we collaborate for continued progress in Haiti.

Ms. Mejía Vélez (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Permanent Missions of Mexico and Jamaica for the leadership demonstrated throughout the consultations leading to the adoption of the very important resolution 71/161 B, on the new United Nations approach to cholera in Haiti, which is certainly

a new step in the right direction that allows us to continue supporting the Government and the people of Haiti with the help of the Group of Friends of Haiti, of which Colombia is a member.

My delegation is convinced that the text of the resolution establishes a new road map so as to achieve a comprehensive approach that allows us to make better use of resources and efforts aimed at overcoming the serious humanitarian health crisis in our region. To that end, we add our voice to the call on Member States, as well as various regional and international organizations, so that we may continue our contribution to the well-being of a country that, despite its difficulties, has always shown great courage and enormous determination.

As the representative of Haiti just stated, it is also useful to point out how the political progress that the country has made has certainly contributed to the drawdown of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti, planned for next October, and its transition to — what is most important for us — justice support through the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti.

That has also allowed us as a region to strengthen and reaffirm the importance of South-South cooperation, and as the Group of Friends of Haiti did during its most recent visit to Haiti, two months ago, establish greater coordination among all the stakeholders involved in confronting the challenges related to cholera, directed towards strengthening a system that can respond more comprehensively and improve living conditions for Haitians. That also has a more historical connotation for us, because it was from Haiti in 1815 that the liberator Simón Bolívar relaunched the liberty march that made us a nation. Without Haiti, Colombia would not have been able to become a republic. That is why we will always be ready to support Haiti in building of a more prosperous country, as it is on the path to overcoming its difficulties.

Mr. Nayan (Philippines): The Philippines co-sponsored resolution 71/161 B, as it was compelled by a need to assist the people of Haiti, 800,000 of whom have been affected by the cholera epidemic and remain in dire need of help. In response to the call for financial and other appropriate support in paragraph 3 of the resolution, and in solidarity with the people of Haiti, the Philippines is pleased to make a voluntary financial contribution of $50,000 to the United Nations Haiti Cholera Response Multi-Partner Trust Fund in support of the new United Nations approach to cholera in Haiti.

Mr. García Moritán (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are grateful to the delegations of Jamaica and Mexico for having facilitated resolution 71/161 B, which we also co-sponsored and on which we joined the consensus.

Argentina reiterates its concern about the persistence of the cholera epidemic in Haiti notwithstanding the efforts and progress made by the Haitian Government and the various regional and international actors to alleviate the situation. In that regard, we support the relevant efforts of the Secretary-General to implement a new United Nations approach to cholera in Haiti geared towards intensifying the Organization's support for eliminating cholera by catalysing actions so that all Haitians have access to safe drinking water and sanitation, as well as providing material assistance and support to those most directly affected.

We also welcome the establishment of the United Nations Haiti Cholera Response Multi-Partner Trust Fund, as well as the appointment of Ms. Josette Sheeran as Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Haiti, who will be responsible for designing a broad strategy for garnering voluntary contributions and supporting Haitian efforts to meet its sustainable development goals. We wish Ms. Sheeran the greatest success in her new functions.

Since 1994, Argentina has participated in all United Nations efforts aimed at assisting Haiti in its efforts to achieve stability and development. In that vein, we welcomed the successful drawdown of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) and the transition towards a new stage, which we hope will ultimately lead to consolidating peace in Haiti. After 13 years and following the departure of our battalion and the air unit in April 2015, our level 2 military hospital will leave the country in August. That hospital has been heavily involved in United Nations efforts to alleviate and solve the various health issues inherent to its mission, including in the prevention of cholera and care of its victims, as well as the devastating consequences of the 2010 earthquake, when initially it was the only operating health facility left intact.

The end of the MINUSTAH mandate does not, however, mean that we will draw away from Haiti because, besides continuing with our bilateral cooperation, we will continue to participate with the

current 15 Argentine civilian police officers, with the possibility of an increase if possible and necessary within the framework of the mandate of the new Mission — the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti, so as to continue with the development of the Haitian National Police's capacities. We are confident that the new Mission will also contribute to implementing the Organization's new approach to cholera.

In conclusion, for all those reasons, we reiterate our country's commitment to the new United Nations approach to cholera in Haiti. In that regard, we would like to announce that Argentina will make a voluntary contribution of $10,000 for 2017 to the United Nations Haiti Cholera Response Multi-Partner Trust Fund.

Mr. Bonser (Canada): Canada was proud to co-sponsor resolution 71/161 B and to continue to actively support the United Nations efforts in fighting cholera in Haiti. In that regard, we thank the Secretary-General for his most recent report (A/71/895), on the new United Nations approach to cholera in Haiti and for his ongoing commitment to ensure its successful implementation.

Let me also take this opportunity to welcome and congratulate Ms. Josette Sheeran on her appointment as the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Haiti. Let me assure Ms. Sheeran of Canada's full support as she carries out her important mandate.

We are encouraged to see a reduction in the number of suspected cases of cholera in recent months in Haiti. That shows that the intensified approach in place is working. But those encouraging signs should not be used as an excuse for us not to do more. Indeed, now is the time for us all to support the new approach until cholera is eradicated in Haiti.

(*spoke in French*)

Canada supports the proposal of the Secretary-General to reallocate the unencumbered balance of the budget of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti to fight cholera in Haiti. We will therefore respond positively to his request, which we hope will enable us to respond partially to the urgent needs outlined in the report. We also call upon other States Members of the United Nations to respond favourably to the request.

(*spoke in English*)

In conclusion, let me reiterate my country's strong support for Haiti's long-term development and to the fight against cholera. As the United Nations and the international community, responding adequately to this crisis is both our moral obligation and a key to ensure that Haiti progresses on the road to development.

Mr. Castañeda Solares (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): Guatemala thanks the delegations of Jamaica and Mexico for presenting and facilitating resolution 71/161 B, entitled "The new United Nations approach to cholera in Haiti". Guatemala co-sponsored the resolution, thereby reaffirming our support for the new United Nations approach presented by the Secretary-General.

The resolution acknowledges the urgent need to alleviate the suffering that cholera causes to the Haitian population and, at the same time, urges that efforts be made to prevent the prolongation of the crisis. We commend the efforts spearheaded by the Government of Haiti, which are supported by the United Nations and other regional and international actors. Similarly, we support the recommendation that the unencumbered balance, other income credited and adjustments to the budget of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) for the period 2015-2016 be redirected to the United Nations Haiti Cholera Response Multi-Partner Trust Fund.

Guatemala takes this opportunity to acknowledge the work previously conducted by the military and police contingents who, operating under MINUSTAH's mandate, coordinated and established quick-impact projects focusing, in many cases, on the need for clean water and sanitation in the country. At the time, many of those projects contributed to the Haitian Government's efforts to strengthen the country's drinking-water supply throughout the country. Through the implementation of those kinds of projects, notable efforts were made to combat waterborne diseases such as cholera. We hope that this new approach will include lessons learned in the past and provide the continuity required.

Finally, we wish Ms. Josette Sheeran every success as the new Special Envoy for Haiti in her efforts to reduce the impact of cholera in the country.

Mr. Barros Melet (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, we would like to thank the delegations of Mexico and Jamaica for presenting resolution 71/161 B, which Chile co-sponsored.

In the current context, and with the difficulties that Haiti has faced, the cholera epidemic continues to be

one of the main humanitarian challenges. Although the incidence of the disease has decreased since 2011, statistics remain alarmingly high and the response capacity has been insufficient. The devastating passage of Hurricane Matthew, in 2016, served only to make the context more complex. The cholera epidemic can come to an end only if there is a broad response from the international community, in particular from the States represented here in the General Assembly.

We commend the steps taken by former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in acknowledging the role that the United Nations played and in launching a new approach to fight cholera in Haiti, which is supported by Secretary-General António Guterres. Chile supports that plan, which includes not only the issue of the response in the short, medium and long terms, with a view to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, but also includes material steps to support the victims, their families and communities. We believe that the United Nations has a debt to repay in that regard, which is why the United Nations Haiti Cholera Response Multi-Partner Trust Fund requires the financing necessary to support the programme — on both track 1 and track 2 of the new approach.

Supporting efforts to combat cholera has been a priority for Chile. As a participant in the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti, we contributed to the work the Mission conducted in its various quick-impact projects to support Haiti's national plan for the elimination of cholera. In 2015, Chile made financial contributions to the vaccination programme against cholera launched by the Pan American Health Organization, UNICEF and local authorities, which focused primarily on Haiti's children. Along the same lines, last February Chile was one of the first countries to make a contribution to the Trust Fund, thereby reaffirming our commitment to strengthening institutions, development and the well-being of Haiti and its people.

With regard to the text of the resolution, we value the fact that it is not only a document that provides political support; it also includes specific measures, as indicated in paragraphs 4 and 5. We are pleased that resolution 71/161 B was adopted by consensus. We hope that it will provide effective support to the new approach and thereby help to alleviate the suffering of our brothers and sisters in Haiti.

The President: We have heard the last speaker following the adoption of the resolution.

Before concluding, I would like to commend delegations for a very positive and responsible debate today. I particularly applaud the statement made on behalf of the Caribbean Community, which was so positive and forward-looking. It was very much on the mark in emphasizing the role of the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goal 6. Now is the time for us all to act.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (c) of agenda item 69.

The meeting rose at 3.50 p.m.